

THE MODEL CONGREGATION.

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A model, for the purpose of imitation, is a perfect example of its kind. In sketching the picture of a *model* congregation it is desirable to sketch a *perfect* picture. The perfection of the picture must depend upon the skill and intelligence of the artist; and perhaps it depends too, upon the creative powers of his imagination for possibly the original never existed.

The model congregation is industriously and aggressively awake to *all* the local and general interests of the church, and anxiously willing to promote her welfare. Its members are consecrated Christians having on the whole armor of Christ, acting upon the principle that "Next to an active sinner Satan loves a passive saint;" and they prove by their activities that they have no share in the affections of his satanic majesty. They are possessed of two kinds of zeal: an earnest, winning, spiritual zeal and a careful, methodical, business zeal. The first leads them into saving souls, the second leads them into watching with jealous care the business interests of the church, at home and abroad.

During a revival meeting *all* these members of the model congregation work and pray as earnestly as the minister. When his hands must be constantly upheld in defence of right, they stand loyally by to strengthen. If his voice be always raised in vindication of truth, they are examples of the light made manifest by the truth. By their loyalty, earnestness, purity and consecration they contribute as much as the pastor to the success of the meeting.

This congregation realizes too, what no other congregation does realize, that Sunday begins as early in the morning as any other day, and that it is as necessary to begin early the Lord's work on the Lord's day as to hurry about their own petty affairs every other day of the week. They rise in the morning in time to do all *necessary* work, get ready for church services and attend *every* service of the day, and are happy in the effort. They say nothing about wanting to rest one day in the week, but they feel that it is a rest to leave work and worry at home, out of sight and out of mind, and go into God's house, and meet God's people, and hear God's word, grasping Christian hands, looking into Christian faces, speaking and hearing words of Christian love and hope, gathering rich truths from him who said "Come unto me all ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They enter into all services with a reverent heart, sing joyously, pray earnestly, listen carefully, receive thankfully, opening the heart to receive

the message, and not only the message but also the spirit of him who sent it. During the moments of social intercourse that follow the services these model people talk not about corn husking and politics and Saturday's baking and Monday's washing, but about the sermon, the joy of meeting together in worship, the good that is being done, not forgetting to tell the pastor that his sermon was enjoyed and appreciated.

This congregation, old and young, attends Sunday school. They all know that no matter how hard a minister may work he cannot teach them all they ought to know, so they go into the school to learn for themselves. They willingly do anything they can do, utilizing every talent God has given them, knowing that here more than elsewhere they get a practical personal knowledge of the Word. And the model Sunday-school maintained by this model congregation always uses the supplies and publications of their own publishing house, and pay for the supplies promptly when due.

They go to prayer meeting too. Not a half-dozen but all the congregation whenever possible. They realize that all spiritual strength comes from above; that all holy inspiration comes from heaven; and that the perfect life can only be maintained by frequent communication with the Father. From experience they know of the strength and holy joy to be received by mingling their prayers and testimonies together, and in the prayer meeting they reflect the strength and happiness they receive in communicating with God in the privacy of home. They read their Bibles daily, seeking through divine revelation to grow into the likeness of Christ.

These people are good missionaries. Some one has said, "Every consideration that made a Savior of Christ makes a missionary of every disciple," a truth that our model congregation never forgets. They are so happy in their own salvation that they make every effort to carry or send the good news to those who are hungering for the truth. They heed every call that appeals to their sympathy and generosity. Petitions for help from stricken and distressed sister churches always find a ready response in their hearts, and if they can help but a little, they do their best.

All other institutions of the church are carefully fostered; the young peoples' work which is capable of such wonderful results in training young soldiers to bear the cross and win the crown; the S. S. C. E. which has proven itself a valuable aid to the church, spiritually and financially; the business meetings where all the business affairs of the church are freely dis-

cussed and harmoniously adjusted; where reports are received, officers elected, committees appointed, etc.

This congregation is always represented at the State and National Conferences of the church. They not only send a full representation of lay members but they send their pastor, and pay all his expenses. And when he receives a very urging call sometime to go and hold a meeting for some poor weak church, they tell him to go, and they send their prayers with him and continue his salary while he is gone. They always let a hard working pastor know that he is loved and appreciated, not only by paying him promptly, but by working earnestly with him and for him.

They help maintain the educational interests of the general church by contributing freely their share of money, and by donating large quantities of personal influence to secure patronage and prestige. And they contribute to the success of the publishing enterprises by becoming subscribers, for the church paper. They know that in no other way can they be brought so perfectly in touch with the general brotherhood, and in no other way can they learn all the good news and encouraging reports that come through this medium. They cherish their church paper as a dear friend who visits them regularly, bringing them good news of absent friends, cheer, comfort, encouragement and inspiration.

This model congregation always remembers that reproof of Christ, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" They are careful not to be what has been called "second hand Christians" doing their work "by proxy." Rev. J. K. Wilson said once in the Golden Rule that many Christians want some one else to do all their work for them; siug for them, pray for them, preach for them, give for them, go to meeting for them when it is cold or hot or dark or muddy—in short do everything for them except to go to heaven. They are very willing to do that for themselves, forgetting that the one who does their share of the work will probably get their share of the crown.

A good woman who was widely known because of her philanthropy once said, "The only fear I have is that I 'may not know and do the will of God.'" This is the fear of our model Christians; a fear which creates the desire to know his will and the determination to do it. They find it is his will that they shall teach, or lead a prayer-meeting, or visit the sick, or help the needy, or invite sinners to Christ, or publicly testify, or go as a missionary, or help send some one else. Every member exercises a personal faith in a personal Savior. He knows that he is fitted for